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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
VIRTUAL FELLOWS PROGRAM
PROJECT DESCRIPTION – DRL/IRF

This project seeks a Virtual Fellow to serve with the **Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL/IRF)** as **Freedom of Religion Consultant.**

Fellow Location: The Fellow will serve virtually and will not be physically located at the Department of State.

Project Name: Religious Registration and Regulation and Freedom of Religion

Project Background: DRL/IRF is engaged in medium-to-long term policy initiatives on a variety of fronts, including sectarian and inter-religious conflict, countering violent extremism, and religious minority discrimination. One additional initiative cuts across these three and has become a core office priority: the burgeoning role of regulatory and legal frameworks in policing religious practice and identity, which legalize discrimination and repression of religious and non-religious persons and exacerbate social and political tensions. In many ways, these registration schemes define the contemporary global challenge of freedom of religion. Our human rights dialogues and other conversations have (with regard to particular countries) focused closely on registration and regulatory frameworks but with little success.

Project Description DRL/IRF is interested in 1) assessing and categorizing the varieties of ways in which registration or other regulation restricts religious freedom and 2) obtaining a recommendation, based on that assessment, of whether any model of registration or regulation is less harmful and how these schemes might be implemented in ways that better support religious freedom

Potential Fellow Taskings:

- Present concrete policy and program recommendations for State and other agencies regarding religious registration and regulation schemes;
- Write policy papers on religious freedom in key countries.

Program Requirements: The precepts of the Virtual Fellows Program call for Fellows to have a high degree of administrative, professional, or technical knowledge/experience and a minimum of five years of professional experience that is directly applicable to the assigned task.

Project-specific Knowledge, Skills, or Abilities:

- Background in research and analysis;
- Extensive experience with religious freedom issues throughout the world.
- Reading knowledge of other languages.

Additional Background Information: Contemporary Evidence Regarding the Impact of State Regulation of Religion on Religious Participation and Belief, Sociology of Religion (2008) 69 (3): 245-271

Clearance: The Fellow must be a U.S. citizen and must receive a Public Trust determination prior to starting his/her service. The Virtual Fellows Program staff will work with the accepted candidate to obtain the Public Trust determination. (Note: A candidate is NOT required to have a Public Trust determination prior to applying for this project.)

Remuneration: The Virtual Fellow will be appointed to the federal civil service as an intermittent, unpaid consultant. The Department assumes no responsibility for providing any salary or benefits to the Fellow in connection with his/her participation in the Program.